

WATER

Matters

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What Have We Done for You Lately?

Busting the “government work” myth

If you're a Discovery Channel watcher, you're probably familiar with a popular program called “MythBusters.” The congenial hosts of the show are special effects experts who use modern-day science to separate truth from urban legend.

Unfortunately, government agencies like the South Florida Water Management District are oftentimes saddled with the myth of “close enough for government work.” But one look at the District's \$1.1 billion budget and workplan for the upcoming year and that myth is totally busted!

“We are constantly challenging ourselves to raise the bar and to significantly exceed public expectations,” said District Executive Director Carol Ann Wehle. “In fact, our strategic focus and direction is to expedite the completion of projects as quickly as possible. Not by cutting corners or reducing quality, but by prioritizing needs, allocating resources and capitalizing on the expertise of a world class staff.”

The annual budget is funded through a variety of sources and less than 40 percent comes directly from South Florida taxpayers.

SIGNIFICANT RETURN ON INVESTMENT

No matter the transaction, everyone always wants to make sure they are getting their money's worth when it comes to paying for products and services. As everyday costs keep climbing – such as real estate, gasoline, insurance and electricity –

individuals, families, businesses, organizations and governments are all struggling to keep up.

“Our job is to make sure you get your tax dollars' worth – and more,” Wehle said. “As we enter a new budget year (October 1 - September 30), it is the ideal time to reflect on the District's broad scope of water management mandates and responsibilities.”

While it's easy to recognize the benefits and services provided by counties and cities for police, fire, school or utilities, it may not be quite as obvious when it comes to water management and Everglades taxes. Though it's typically a relatively small amount (about 70 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value) of your total tax bill, the return on your annual “investment” in support of regional water resources is significant and provides lasting benefits.

Here are some examples of major accomplishments, along with highlights of upcoming key projects and initiatives for next year:

Flood Control. As we recover from the impacts of Hurricane Katrina this year, we also continue to feel the aftermath of 2004's unprecedented hurricane season. Combined, District structures moved 13.5 million acre-feet of stormwater during the months of August and September alone – successfully averting the potential for catastrophic flooding. The hurricanes required continuous

continued inside

in this issue...

▶ How the budget stacks up

▶ Around the region

▶ A model system

▶ Find Freddy

▶ Summertime slime

▶ This land is your land

▶ Ask Freddy

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